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DUDLEY PETER ALLEN

BY GEORGE W. CRILE, M.D., F.A.C.S., CLEVELAND, OHIO

MEN who achieve distinction achieve it along widely diverse paths. Some as a result of a single stroke of genius scale the heights of fame. Others as the result of long years of effort along one or a few closely related lines, make discoveries of great significance in their chosen fields. Still others, as the result of unusual versatility are able to place the impress of their personalities upon diverse fields achieving distinction in each.

In this last group should be placed Dudley Peter Allen, who was at once a surgeon whose abilities as such brought to him the recognition of his fellows as expressed in his election as president of the Ohio State Medical Association and of the American Surgical Association and his appointment as an honorary fellow of the Philadelphia Academy of Surgery and of the American College of Surgeons; a connoisseur of the arts, whose unusual knowledge of the graphic arts in particular has been memorialized in the Cleveland Museum of Art and in the beautiful Museum in Oberlin which bears his name; a literateur with a specialized knowledge of the literature pertaining to his chosen profession, a knowledge which found its chief expression in the Cleveland Medical Library and will be memorialized by the new building which is to bear his name; and an organizer, as evidenced repeatedly throughout the long period of his connection with the Medical School of Western Reserve University and with Lakeside Hospital.

Dudley Peter Allen was born in Kinsman, at the original family homestead in the Western Reserve, on March 25, 1852, but his youth was spent in the town of Oberlin, where he passed through Oberlin College in his preparation for the profession, which we may assume was chosen more or less as a matter of course because of the family background. We are told by those who knew him well that in his undergraduate days he was not especially studious and showed no particular interest in his work except for a love of literature engendered by seasons of ill health. At Harvard, however, the importance of application and of studiousness appeared first to be awakened in him and he soon became a man of mark among his classmates. Even during his student days, the versatility which was his outstanding characteristic was evidenced and while pursuing his medical studies he was already making a special study of the history of art and beginning a collection of etchings and engravings.

Just what led him to be a surgeon rather than an internist I do not know, but it seems to have been an unswerving determination, one from which he never wavered. It is possible that in addition to the opportunities for study in the great surgical clinics of the continent a desire to study the treasures of art in the museums of Europe may have been a lure, which drew him to Europe upon the completion of his medical course in Harvard and of his year of residency in the Massachusetts General Hospital. However that may be, both in his vocation and in his avocation he gained immeasurably from the postgraduate years spent abroad and when he came to Cleveland in 1883 to begin the active practice of his profession, it was not surprising that with the equipment gained from his prolonged studies added to his natural abilities he soon became marked among his fellows.

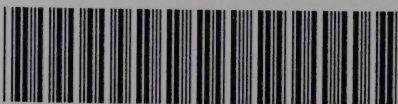
In his surgical career here, perhaps nothing is more characteristic of the singleness of purpose of the man as far as his profession was concerned, than his preference to retain a minor teaching position in surgery in the medical school until the chair of surgery was tendered him, rather than, at a far earlier date, to accept a promotion to the chair of gynecology.

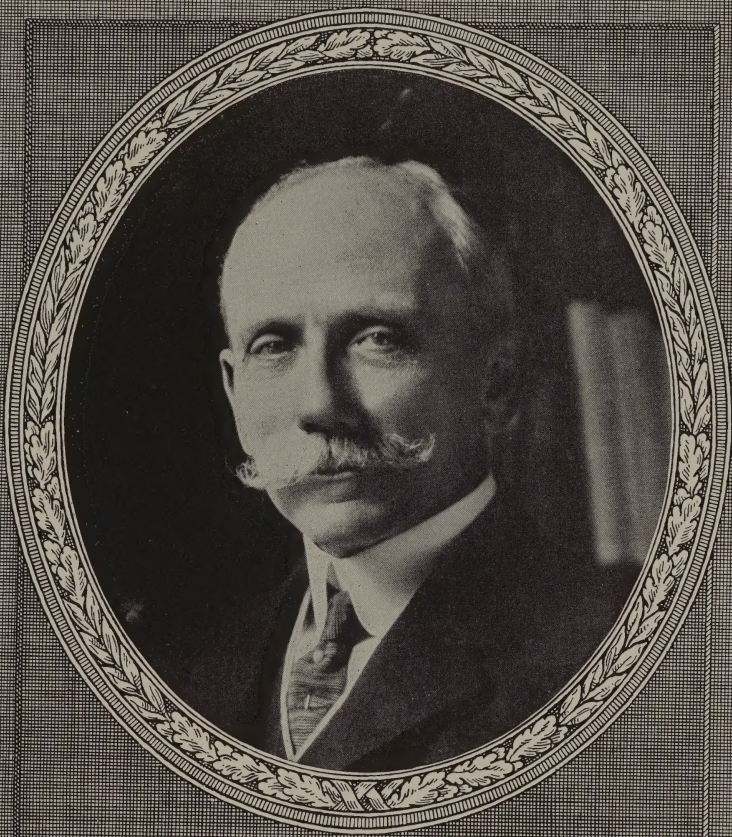
For brief successive periods he served on the staffs of the Cleveland City, and of St. Vincent's Charity Hospital, and in 1886 went to Lakeside Hospital where he served continuously until his resignation in 1910. Throughout this period although never a prolific writer he was an occasional contributor to medical journals, his articles covering a wide diversity of subjects, for he was in no sense a surgical specialist. He was an excellent teacher and had the gift of presenting clearly and concisely salient clinical and technical points.

Dr. Deaver has well summed up the outstanding professional characteristics of Dr. Allen:

"Doctor Allen's standing in the surgical world must be judged by his ability as a hospital organizer, as a teacher of surgery, an operator, and by the inspiration of his personal contact. His contributions to medical literature consisted chiefly in addresses and articles for journals, important articles with which we are familiar, and which treat of a wide range of subjects, but especially in the domain of abdominal surgery. Prolific contribution to surgical literature is not a characteristic of the class of surgeons of which Doctor Allen was a leader, the essentially practical man. His several writings invariably deal with the subject from the viewpoint of the clinician. As a successful operator he was naturally interested in the development of the technical side of his art, rather than of the theory, and not a few of his literary efforts deal with anæsthesia, asepsis, and postoperative treatment.

"Dudley P. Allen will always be remembered in this community as a highly successful practitioner of surgery; his reputation abroad will endure as an inspiring teacher of surgical principles, as the leading spirit in the development of an excellent medical school and hospital, and finally, as a leader in the societies devoted to the improvement of his specialty."





DUDLEY P. ALLEN
1852-1915

It is not often that it is given to a man to achieve almost as much recognition in his avocation as in his vocation but that was the happy lot of the subject of this sketch. Resigning from his practice while still it was expected that many years of usefulness remained to him, Dr. Allen turned his devoted interest to the support of two institutions in Cleveland—the Museum of Art and the Cleveland Medical Library. A journey around the world gave him the opportunity for extending his knowledge of art and enlarging his private collection and upon his return he became a trustee of the Cleveland Museum of Art and bore a large share in the extension of its activities. His interest in music claimed also a share of his attention. In particular he was actively interested in the promotion of the interests of the Medical Library Association of which he was the president from 1903 to 1906. It is principally due to his efforts and to his gifts that the Cleveland Medical Library has the distinction of being one of the important medical libraries in the country.

In the midst of these activities, while his friends and co-workers were looking forward to many fruitful years of service to the community, Dr. Allen died suddenly of pneumonia in New York City on January 6, 1915, leaving a permanent impress upon the professional, the artistic, and the social life of the community in which he had made his home for thirty-three years.

